

Media Release

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“Melbourne at War”- Heritage Council audio tour for centenary of World War I

Exploring wartime Melbourne is brought to life with a new audio tour highlighting the efforts on the home front during World War I.

Developed by the Heritage Council of Victoria, the tour highlights seven major locations around Melbourne CBD which played an important part during the war and remain today.

It uncovers hidden histories behind some of these well known places and the roles they played in 1914-1918.

The tour provides some fascinating insights into places people walk past every day. It serves as a reminder that Melbourne was the nation's capital during this tumultuous time in history with Parliament House, the Melbourne Exhibition Building and Victoria Barracks all playing vital roles in the war effort.

Other locations include Government House which played a key role during the conscription constitutional crisis of 1917 and also served as the Australian headquarters of the Red Cross. The ballroom of Government House was hive of activity with tables piled high with bandages and care packages.

Melbourne Town Hall, one of many locations around the state which served as recruitment centres when war was declared, is another stop.

More than 112 000 Victorians enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. Of this some 19 000 were killed and many thousands more were wounded, gassed or became prisoners of war.

The Heritage Council of Victoria developed the tour to mark the centenary of ANZAC and to remind people that Melbourne saw conflict, division, pain and celebration during that time.

Another stop along the audio tour is Yarra Bank. Once known as Speakers Corner a crowd of 100 000 people gathered there on 4 October 1916 for the nation's largest anti-conscription rally. Among the protestors was John Curtin who would go on to be Australia's Prime Minister during World War II.

Many locations on the tour are on the Victorian Heritage Register, the official listing of the more than 2,200 places and objects which had been assessed as significant to the State of Victoria. The listing provides the State's highest heritage protection.

The “Melbourne at War: Hidden Histories 1914-1918” audio tour is available to download from the Heritage Council of Victoria's website at <http://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/get-involved/tours/melbourne-at-war-hidden-histories-1914-18-audio-tour/>

or the Victorian Heritage Database site at <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/tours/recommended-tour/1702>